

## Working it out – Task 2

### Scenario

You have been finding out about flexible working opportunities at your place of work. This is mainly because you would like to reduce your working hours to give you a better work/life balance and spend more time with your child.

### Activity:

#### Write a letter.

You want to apply for flexible working. Write a letter to your employer making a formal request.

Mrs Varsha Rao, Personnel Manager, Hobbs and Company, 12 New Street, Birmingham, B1 2RB

Remember to set out your letter correctly.

In your letter explain:

- why you want to work flexibly
- the new hours you would like to work
- when you would like the new arrangements to start
- what benefits this would bring both you and your employer
- any other information which is relevant.

You can use the information in the document to help you. You may also use your own ideas to complete this activity.

**Marks available: 20**

## Source Document

Adapted from a Business Link site on flexible working:

## Making an application for flexible working



Your **application** must:

- be made in advance
- be in writing
- be dated
- give details of the work pattern you want
- give the date you want to start
- explain the effect on your employer
- state if you have applied before.

Think about what effect any changes will have on your job. You should show that your plans would not harm the business. They may improve it – if so you should say how this could affect your employer in a positive way.

Your employer will decide if your request is right for the business. Employers are required to consider requests in a "reasonable manner". They must notify you of the decision within three months of your request being made.

You are only allowed to apply once a year.

To have the legal right to make a request you have to meet the following **eligibility criteria** although employers can consider requests from those who do not have this right.

To be eligible to make a legal request you must:

- be an employee: agency workers do not qualify
- have worked for your employer continuously for at least 26 weeks
- not have made another request in the past year.

The types of things you can ask for are:

- change the hours you work
- change the times when you work
- work from another place or from home.

Many employers think flexible working makes **good business sense**. For example, it can lead to:

- lower office costs when workers work from home
- staff being happy at work
- fewer days off sick
- better people applying for jobs
- staff staying longer.

## Mark scheme used by examiners:

### Markers' Briefing Note

Marks in the English Writing component are awarded for 'independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context'. Whilst the learner may use the content of any Source Documents to inform their writing, the Writing Activities do not assess Reading skills. Learners are expected to produce an open response.

Depending on the context of the activity, a learner may support either side of an argument, or adopt any well-reasoned stance, using the Source Documents and /or their own ideas and experiences. What should be assessed is their ability to do so whilst meeting all the coverage and range criteria of the Writing Skill Standard.

Writing Activity Writing a letter	Marks	Skill standard assessed
<p><b>Content:</b> Award 1 mark <b>for each</b> of the following, up to a maximum of <b>5 marks</b></p> <p>The letter should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain why the learner is writing (to ask for flexible working)</li> <li>• give details of the new type of working arrangement they would like</li> <li>• explain how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (<b>1 mark</b> for a brief explanation, <b>2 marks</b> for a full account)</li> <li>• include any further plausible/reasonable details which focus on the purpose of the letter</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 (max)</b></p>	<p>1.3.1 Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail.</p>
<p><b>Structure:</b> Award 1 mark <b>for each</b> of the following, up to a maximum of <b>2 marks</b>.</p> <p>The learner wrote using language and structure suitable for a formal letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language – suitable for publication</li> <li>• structure – clearly paragraphed</li> </ul>	<p><b>2 (max)</b></p>	<p>1.3.2 Present information in a logical sequence.</p>

<p><b>Format and style:</b></p> <p>Award 1 mark <b>for each</b> of the following, up to a maximum of <b>4 marks</b>.</p> <p>The learner uses a letter format including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two addresses</li> <li>• Date</li> <li>• Appropriate salutation and close – Dear Mrs Rao and Yours sincerely</li> <li>• Logical sequence</li> </ul>	<p><b>4 (max)</b></p>	<p>1.3.3</p> <p>Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience.</p>
<p><b>Spelling:</b></p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for <b>one</b> of the bulleted statements. Base the judgement on the notes contained below which identify the particular words/skills desired at Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The spelling of Level 1 words is almost totally accurate and meaning is clear (there may be one or two lapses).</li> <li>• The spelling of Level 1 words is usually accurate (with at least 75% accuracy).</li> <li>• The spelling of Level 1 words is accurate at least 50% of the time, but there are several lapses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>At Level 1, a learner is expected to correctly spell regular, common words used most often in work, studies and daily life such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Words using the <i>-ly</i>, <i>-er</i>, <i>-age</i> suffixes: <i>sincerely</i>, <i>definitely</i>, <i>package</i></li> <li>➤ Homophones: <i>four/for</i>, <i>were/we're</i>, <i>meet/meat</i>, <i>write/right</i></li> <li>➤ Single vowels plus consonant: <i>future</i>, <i>computers</i></li> <li>➤ Two different vowels in the middle of a word: <i>loans</i>, <i>leave</i>, <i>await</i></li> <li>➤ Unstressed vowels: <i>separate</i>, <i>restaurant</i>, <i>interesting</i>, <i>library</i></li> <li>➤ <i>ie</i> or <i>ei</i> confusions: <i>receive</i>, <i>believe</i></li> <li>➤ Pluralising words ending in <i>y</i>, <i>f</i>, <i>fe</i> or <i>o</i>: <i>babies</i>, <i>shelves</i>, <i>libraries</i></li> </ul> <p>(Learners should not be penalised for failing to spell correctly words which are associated with a higher level than Level 1. Zero marks can be awarded if there is no progression from Entry 3).</p>	<p><b>3 (max)</b></p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.5i</p> <p>Ensure written work includes generally accurate spelling and that meaning is clear.</p>

<p><b>Punctuation:</b></p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for <b>one</b> of the bulleted statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation is almost totally accurate (i.e. a range of punctuation including full stops, capital letters, commas and question marks is generally used accurately).</li> <li>• A range of punctuation including full stops, capital letters, commas and question marks is used accurately most of the time (i.e. with at least 75% accuracy).</li> <li>• Punctuation is accurate at least 50% of the time (i.e. full stops and capital letters are sometimes used accurately).</li> </ul> <p>(Learners should not be penalised for incorrectly using commas and apostrophes usually associated with Level 2. Zero marks can be awarded if there is no progression from Entry 3).</p>	<p><b>3 (max)</b></p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.5ii</p> <p>Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation and that meaning is clear.</p>
<p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for <b>one</b> of the bulleted statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The grammar is almost totally accurate, (i.e. subject-verb agreement, consistent use of tenses and pronouns; any errors stand out as untypical or 'one-off' mistakes).</li> <li>• The grammar is accurate at least 75% of the time, (i.e. subject-verb agreement and consistent use of tenses and pronouns, although there may be some errors).</li> <li>• The grammar is at least 50% accurate, (i.e. there may be some basic grammatical errors in e.g. subject-verb agreement or consistency of tenses).</li> </ul>	<p><b>3 (max)</b></p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.4</p> <p>Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense.</p>
<p><b>Total marks available (including 9 for spelling, punctuation and grammar)</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	

## Learner response:

## Learner A

26 january 2016

Dear sir

i'm writting to you to request for flexible working hours as my child is strted school and there is no one availble to drop her off in the mornings.

the hours i am requesting are 10 till 6 as this will allow me time to take my child to school in the morning and then get to work on time my partner will be availble to pick her up in the afternoons.

the company will benifit from the change in my hours as the buisness will be aleb to stay open later, id be more happy coming to work,it would make life easier.

i have worked for the company for 10 years now and i have been loyal i have always been on time.

i have never asked for change in my hours and i feel this is a fair request i hope to hear from you with in 28 days

yours sincerly miss smith

**Examiner comment:****Learner A - Marks awarded****Content:**

- explains why the learner is writing (1)
- gives details of the new type of working arrangement they would like (1)
- explains a *brief* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (1), gives a *full* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (0)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable details which focus on the purpose of the letter (1)

**Content total: 4****Structure:**

- the language is suitable for publication (0)
- the letter is clearly and appropriately paragraphed (0).

**Structure total: 0****Format and style:**

Letter format including:

- two addresses (0)
- date (1)
- appropriate salutation and close (Dear Mrs Rao and Yours sincerely) (0)
- logical sequence (1)

**Format and style total: 2****Spelling, punctuation and grammar**

- Spelling: **1**
- Punctuation: **0** (Punctuation is no more than Entry Level. For example, there is only one capital letter in the whole response whereas there should be 18).
- Grammar: **2** (There are some serious grammar errors. For example, " im writting to you to request for flexible working hours as my child is strted school").

**SPAG total: 3****Total mark: 9****Overall comment**

Learner A has addressed the brief well but the structure and formatting of the letter is poor. SPAG has also deteriorated since Task 1.

**Learner response:****Learner B**

*Dear Sir/madam*

*I would like to make a request for flexible working due to the fact that my son starts school in september, my current hours are 8am to 4pm but would like to change them to 10am to 6pm so i can take my son to school in the mornings,*

*I would be happy to stay until 6am to make up the two hours I would miss in the morning if i started at 10am*

*Regards Joe Smith*



**Examiner comment:****Learner B - Marks awarded****Content:**

- explains why the learner is writing (1)
- gives details of the new type of working arrangement they would like (1)
- explains a *brief* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (0), gives a *full* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (0)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable details which focus on the purpose of the letter (0)

**Content total: 2****Structure:**

- the language is suitable for publication (0)
- the letter is clearly and appropriately paragraphed (0).

**Structure total: 0****Format and style:**

Letter format including:

- two addresses (0)
- date (0)
- appropriate salutation and close (Dear Mrs Rao and Yours sincerely) (0)
- logical sequence (0).

**Format and style total: 0****Spelling, punctuation and grammar**

- Spelling: 1
- Punctuation: 1
- Grammar: 1

**SPAG total: 3****Total mark: 5****Overall comment**

Learner B has written considerably less than 100 words in this task and therefore cannot qualify for full SPAG marks and the work is inadequate. If this learner had produced a full response in keeping with the volume and quality they wrote in the first task, they would likely have passed.

## Learner response:

## Learner C

5 Manly Road  
Mainsbridge  
Birmingham  
B1 2RB

Personnel Manager  
Hobbs and Company  
12 New Street  
Birmingham  
B1 5RT  
26/01/2016

Dear Mrs Rao

I am writing to apply for flexible working hours. My daughter is starting primary school on the 6th of September 2016, And due to other commitments my partner can only pick her up after school has finished. So we have agreed that I am to take her to school on a morning.

I would like to request the change to my shift pattern, from 8am- 4pm to 10am- 6pm which will allow me to take my daughter to school and still have time to arrive to work at 10am, If possible I would like the shift change to start a week in advance to my daughter starting school so I can adapt to the changes beforehand. I have not applied for flexible working hours before and I meet the criteria for the application as I have worked for the company atleast 26 weeks so I would like to put my application forward.

Could you please acknowledge my request and arrange a meeting suitable for us both, within 28 days of my application as the regulations state.

Yours sincerely

Josie Bloggs

## Examiner comment:

### Learner C - Marks awarded

#### Content:

- explains why the learner is writing (1)
- gives details of the new type of working arrangement they would like (1)
- explains a *brief* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (0), gives a *full* account of how these new arrangements will affect the company and the employee (0)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable details which focus on the purpose of the letter (1)

**Content total: 3**

#### Structure:

- the language is suitable for publication (1)
- the letter is clearly and appropriately paragraphed (1).

**Structure total: 2**

#### Format and style:

Letter format includes:

- two addresses (1)
- date (1)
- appropriate salutation and close (Dear Mrs Rao and Yours sincerely) (1)
- logical sequence (1).

**Format and style total: 4**

#### Spelling, punctuation and grammar

- Spelling: 3
- Punctuation: 3
- Grammar: 3

**SPAG total: 9**

**Total mark: 18**

#### Overall comment:

A very good functional response with few SPAG errors. Only one omission of content - how the arrangements would affect the company and the employee - stopped the learner getting full marks.